



## MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the  
Week of July 21, 2008**

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# Avenue of the Saints

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JEFFERSON CITY – I think everyone who lives and travels in northeast Missouri needs to say a word of thanks to Ernie Hayes this week. Mr. Hayes used to travel on Highway 61 from St. Louis to visit his daughter in St. Paul, Minnesota. It was Mr. Hayes who pushed for the name “Avenue of the Saints” and who lobbied for years to make Highway 61 a four-lane highway. Although Mr. Hayes died in 1990, his dream of a four-lane highway from St. Louis to St. Paul is finally coming true.

On Friday, I attended a ceremony marking the completion of the last section of the highway between Canton and Wayland. Officials from Missouri, Iowa and Minnesota were on hand to dedicate the Avenue of the Saints at the newly constructed Missouri Route 27/61 interchange just south of Wayland. This project was first pitched to Congress some 20 years ago, and it is a project many of us in northeast Missouri have been pushing for years to improve safety and promote economic development.

It’s estimated that as many as seven million people live along the Avenue of the Saints corridor, as well as 250,000 businesses. Completion of the more than 500 miles of this four-lane highway is expected to create a lot more economic development in northeast Missouri. So, thank you, Ernie Hayes, for your vision and your drive to see it through.

We’re still dealing with a lot of flood recovery, and things are beginning to improve, if slowly. We’ve been working with folks affected by the flooding – telling them where to apply for help and how to fill out forms and things like that. Most people in northeast Missouri affected by the flooding have until the end of the month to file a claim.

If you have any questions or comments about this or any other issue, give my Capitol office a call at (573) 751-7852, send me an email at [wes.shoemyer@senate.mo.gov](mailto:wes.shoemyer@senate.mo.gov), or drop a line to Room 434, State Capitol, 201 West Capitol Ave., Jefferson City, MO 65101.